

In the Claims

Please **SUBSTITUTE** the following amended claims for the pending claims with the same number (a marked up copy of the prior pending claim with all changes shown is supplied in the appendix):

Sub D1
1. A method of processing a wafer having a process side and a back side, comprising:
removing un-wanted particles from the back side of the wafer in order to maintain the desired relationship between the backside of the wafer and a chucking surface;
placing the wafer on a chucking surface after removing the unwanted particles from the back side of the wafer;
performing a specific processing task on the process side of the wafer for the first time after placing the wafer on the chucking surface.

Sub D1
5. A method of processing a wafer having a process side and a backside opposite the process side, the method comprising:
providing a semi-dry cleaning module for cleaning the backside of the wafer and a processing module for performing a processing task on the process side of the wafer;
receiving the wafer for processing;
loading the wafer into the cleaning module;
cleaning the backside of the wafer in the semi-dry cleaning module to remove particles therefrom, wherein only the backside of the wafer is cleaned in the semi dry cleaning module so as not to damage the process side of the wafer;
transferring the wafer to the processing module;
loading the wafer into the processing module; and
performing the processing task on the process side of the wafer in the processing module.

Sub D1
9. The method as recited in claim 5 wherein cleaning the backside of the wafer in the semi-dry cleaning module comprises:
providing a brush for scrubbing the backside of the wafer and an applicator for delivering a cleaning solution to the backside of the wafer;
positioning the brush against the backside of the wafer;
flowing the cleaning solution between the backside of the wafer and the brush; and

A3
cancel
SUBD17

flowing the cleaning solution between the backside of the wafer and the brush; and moving the brush relative to the wafer so as to force particles off the backside of the wafer.

Please **CANCEL** claims 2, 3, 7 and 8.

Please **ADD** the following claims (21-24):

SUBD17
A4

21. (New) A method of processing a wafer having a process side and a backside opposite the process side, the method comprising:

wa
[providing a cleaning module for cleaning the backside of the wafer and a plasma reactor for performing a processing task such as etching or deposition on the process side of the wafer, the plasma reactor having a process chamber within which a plasma is formed for the processing task and a chuck for supporting the wafer during the processing task, the chuck being disposed inside the process chamber, the chuck including a heat transfer system;

[cleaning the backside of the wafer in the cleaning module to remove particles therefrom,] wherein only the backside is cleaned so as not to damage the process side of the wafer;

[removing the wafer from the cleaning module] and thereafter introducing the wafer into the process chamber of the plasma reactor;

placing the wafer on the chuck; and

holding the backside of the wafer relative to a top surface of the chuck with an electrostatic force, the cleaned backside of the wafer preventing undesirable gaps from forming between the backside of the wafer and the top surface of the chuck;

performing the processing task with the plasma on the process side of the wafer in the process chamber of the plasma reactor; and

distributing a heat transfer gas to the backside of the wafer via the heat transfer system during the processing task, the cleaned backside of the wafer reducing heat transfer gas faults caused by undesirable gaps.

22. (New) The method as recited in claim 21 wherein the wafer is cleaned with a dry cleaning process.

Sub 11
24
23. (New) The method as recited in claim 21 wherein the wafer is cleaned with a semi-dry cleaning process. *1 -*

24. (New) The method as recited in claim 21 wherein the wafer is cleaned with a wet cleaning process. *wa*
